631 certain amount of independence since they can communicate with the circle commanders with no intermediary other than the interpreter, an indispensable adjunct as long as the chiefs do not attend the [French] schools. On the other hand, the authority of the vassal chiefs still attached to the administrative district of Ouagadougou is, if not entirely lost, at least greatly diminished.

Indeed, their action is thwarted by that of the ministers, the province chiefs, from whom [52] they receive orders, sometimes falsified or amplified by ambitious intermediaries.

It must certainly be conceded that such a state of affairs may have -- it has had -- an unfortunate effect on the progress of these naba. This is an evil which should be remedied without delay.

636 645 565 The local administration at the very beginning made the serious error of failing to take into account the importance of the canton chiefs, most of whom (see the list in the appendix [not translated]) are descendants of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, virtually all the ministers and other court officials, despite the respect one owes them and the privileges they enjoy, are of humble origin (see Chapter 4 for the origins of the Ouidi Naba and the Larrhallé Naba, for example).

The Petty Kings (Dima) in the Past and Today

643 631 As has been noted in the introductory chapter [not translated], some of the chiefs have gradually freed themselves from the authority of the Mogho Naba and have assumed the title of dima, that is, "king." These chiefs are the Boussouma Naba of the Kaya circle, the Konquizitenga Naba of the Kougoudou circle, the Yako Naba of the Kougoudou circle (Yako subdivision), and the Riziam Naba of the Ouahigouya circle.

These chiefs were, in a sense, independent "rulers," since the emperor's suzerainty over them was so weak [53] that they enjoyed almost complete independence. Some of them, notably the Boussouma Naba and the Yako Naba, have authority over canton chiefs whom they invest in the same way the emperor does.

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and chose to fight, and when defeated, fled to the Gold Coast (Ghana). From here he intrigued with the British against the French and even succeeded in having his brother poisoned for accepting the title of Moro Naba. It was only when the British accepted French sovereignty over Mossi country that Bokary accepted his deposition and permanent exile.

Once the traditional electors had chosen one of Bokary's younger relatives, Siguiri as Moro Naba, the Mossi people themselves quietly accepted French rule. Their behavior was in this respect similar to that of many indigenous populations with complex political institutions who had been conquered by the Europeans. In contrast, the neighboring Dogon, Gurunsi, and Lobi, whose political systems were very simple, and who had been constantly raided by the Mossi for slaves, kept on rebelling against French rule, and in some cases shot poisoned arrows at French tax collectors and labor recruiters as late as 1941. The only opposition which they offered the French was in 1910 when an attempt was made to reorganize the Mossi districts for administrative reasons. However, when the French changed their policy of direct administration to a form of indirect rule, the Mossi remained so peaceful that by 1922 there was only one administrator for every 60,000 inhabitants.

Moro Naba Kom who reigned from 1905 to 1942 skillfully preserved the power of the ruling dynasty during a period when the Mossi people were subjected to a rather severe forced labor regime. This was also a period during which the administration deposed chiefs who ran afoul of its wishes or policies. The political ability of this ruler is best exemplified by the order of succession that occurred in the Doulougou district. In 1895 Moro Naba Wobogo had appointed his own son as Doulougou chief in place of Koabga Wedraogo whom he had deposed and killed. However, when Wobogo fled from the French the next year, his son, the Doulougou chief, killed himself because he did not wish to follow his father into exile. The new Moro Naba Siguiri placed a son of the former district chief, Koabga Wodraogo, as chief of Doulougou. This chief died in 1906 and was replaced by a brother. Unfortunately this chief ran afoul of the French, was deposed and placed in "obligatory residence" in another district where he died in 1927. The Moro Naba then elected another son of ex-

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643 Moro Naba Wobogo as chief of Doulougou, but this chief was assas-
636 sinated. Thereafter the Moro Naba placed his own brother as chief
175 of Doulougou district only to have him deposed by the French in 1932
662 for abusing his power. Now the Moro Naba again turned to a descendant of Koabga Wedrago and named him chief, but the French also deposed and jailed this chief for incapacity. Finally in 1935, the Moro Naba named his own son, Etienne Kongo, as chief, and this man was still chief when I left the Mossi in 1957. The interesting feature of this succession is that the Moro Naba confined it to three specific families: his own, that of ex-Moro Naba Wobogo, and that of the ancient chiefly line of Doulougou. In no case did Moro Naba Kom attempt to elevate to chieftainship the son or relative of a man whom the French deposed. He named a chief from another one of the chiefly families, and when a member of this line was deposed, he quickly turned to another one. In this way, the Moro Naba never gave the French any cause for thinking that he disapproved of their action by placing as chief a relative of the man they had deposed. This type of succession was only possible because of the flexibility in the Mossi mode of chiefly succession. Furthermore, the district people readily accepted the chiefs appointed by the Moro Naba because he never deviated from their cultural expectations, or violated the accepted norm of succession.

636 A more serious attempt on the part of the French to influence the
643 traditional political organization of the Mossi came when they tried to enroll the sons of the Moro Naba and those of other chiefs in a special school in order to make these boys adjuncts in their administration. The eldest sons of the Moro Naba and of the officials around Wagadougou were all sent to school because they were well known to the French.
636 However, in the rural districts, the chiefs hesitated to send their eldest
643 sons to school. First of all, they regarded this plan as another form of
186 forced labor from which their sons might never return. And secondly,
662 because they also feared that if these youths did return as educated men, they would have been Christianized, and thereby would have been unable or unwilling to perform the important roles which chiefs had vis-a-vis the ancestors. To palliate the French the chiefs sent their youngest or motherless sons to schools, or in some cases substituted the sons

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of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons."

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the aftermath of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was revealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet [Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[8] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

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636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[197] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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the French Union including one to build up the capital of Wagadougou. 643
At home he has taken an active interest in interdistrict politics, and has 636
acted as a liaison between his fellow traditional chiefs and the Mossi politicians of commoner origins. It goes without saying that he only supports those persons who are not opposed to the Moro Naba. As a matter of course, leading Mossi politicians fearing rebuffs from the district chiefs seldom visit any of the districts in the Manga subdivision unless they are accompanied and introduced by the Manga Naba. This kind of co-operation is what made it reasonable for a united block of political parties in Upper Volta, the Unified Democratic Party (Parti Democratique Unifie) to elect the late Moro Naba Sagha as it's honorary president before his death in 1956. At that time, the new party stressed the point that its action was guided by the fact that only the Mossi people had preserved their political identity throughout African history.[7]

The power of the traditional Mossi chiefs has been ably defended by their new politician-chiefs against those Africans who would relegate the institution of the chieftainship to ethnological musuems. The Manga Naba speaking before the Congress of Traditional Chiefs in Dakar in 1956 declared:

> Without wishing to direct any reproach to those who are demanding the abolition of traditional chieftainships, and who severely criticize institutions of whose value they are totally unaware, we ask them to beware of blaming the desert for the grain of sand which falls into the eye. We ask them not to compare the chieftainship instituted among them only a few years ago, chieftainship which perhaps has been imposed upon them, to ours which has existed for centuries.
>
> It is not our fault, if the manufactured chiefs among them have not known how to perform their tasks and have believed that to administer they had to resort to all sorts of extortions. One has never placed at the head of our villages, districts, provinces, or kingdoms persons who have come from elsewhere (former boys, stewards, cooks, or interpreters), because it could not be done. If in our country there are chiefs who are former civil servants [like the speaker, I must add] it is that they are persons who have inherited these positions according to custom, and in the places of their fathers, uncles, or brothers.

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643 636 We Mossi cannot say that the Europeans have introduced chieftainship among us; for we are old hands at it. Chieftainship has always existed among us, and we intend to conserve it in spite of anything one may say about it.

Who better than we chiefs can hope for a rapid evolution of our country? However, because of the pride we have [185] in the organized society that we have known well before French occupation, we wish this evolution to take place within our specific cultural pattern, to harmonize with, and to take into consideration the wisdom which has permitted us to conserve the integrity of our homeland until French occupation.

Without wishing to place ourselves against the demands of those who are wedded to an overthrow of local traditions, we endeavor to state our position clearly: Let everyone scratch whatever itches him.[8]

643 178 It is too early to predict what will be the fate of the traditional Mossi chiefs. The factors which made for such weaknesses in their political system—hazardous interregnums and flexibility in succession—have certainly ceased to operate. But, as I have shown, by a curious coincidence, a form of succession which evolved to meet a particular set of circumstances served the Mossi in good stead during French occupation, and is now being adapted to serve the needs of a new political environment. This flexibility in succession may even provide the Mossi with a wide enough choice of candidates to preserve the traditional ruling lineages in the face of a changing political system. Furthermore, this flexibility in political succession appears to be more compatible and less in conflict with the principles of universal suffrage which have been introduced in this society to serve the needs of the developing parliamentary system.

The growing use of Mossi traditional chiefs as modern politicians has not precluded the opportunity of Mossi commoners to take part in the governmental organization of the territory in which their group resides. As a matter of fact, there are a number of commoners who [556] are well educated, and individually have held high administrative offices. However, despite a number of them who have been critical of the traditional ruling hierarchy, they have not succeeded in breaking the strong hold of the traditional ruling lineage on the people. Some commoners have even found it to their advantage to ally themselves